

REMARKS

Status of the Claims

Upon entry of the amendment above, claims 1-24 will be pending, claims 1 and 16 being independent.

Summary of the Office Action

The specification is objected to because the section headings are underlined.

Claims 1 and 4 are objected to in view of specified informalities.

Claims 1-4 and 7-10 are rejected under 35 USC §102(b) as being anticipated by HAUSER et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,217,041, hereafter "HAUSER").

Claims 5 and 6 are rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over HAUSER in view of PARTRIDGE (U.S. Patent No. 6,089,581).

Response to the Office Action

A. Request for Withdrawal of Objection to Specification

In response to the objection to the specification, Applicants have attached hereto a substitute specification (*i.e.*, both a marked-up version and a clean version, pursuant to 37 CFR §1.125), by which the underlining of the section headings has been deleted.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection is requested.

B. Request for Withdrawal of Objection to Claims 1 and 4

In response to the objection to claims 1 and 4, Applicants have amended claims 1 and 4 in the manner consistent with the assumptions mentioned in the Office action.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the objections are requested.

C. Request for Withdrawal of Rejections

Applicants have carefully reviewed the two grounds of rejection, including the disclosures of HAUSER and PARTRIDGE, and respectfully request that both grounds of rejections be reconsidered and withdrawn at least for the following reasons.

Applicants' invention is directed to a gliding or rolling board that includes, among other things, at least one reinforcement extending along the board within the volume of the board, as known in the art. In the central zone of the board, such as between the contact lines, the reinforcement (which can be one of a plurality of reinforcements, consistent with the open-ended language of the claims) has a portion with a mechanically weakened structure with respect to a remainder of the reinforcement. This means, therefore, that the reinforcement itself is weakened. However, this feature of the invention does not limit the possibility that other features/characteristics of the board are necessarily changed, such as the shape of the board.

HAUSER discloses a board having a central strip, as mentioned within the section at column 1, lines 46-54, for example, as well as at column 3, lines 4-7, 14-21, and 43-53. The strip provides a longitudinally divided support or base structure including a core with two support bands 5, 6, and another spacer 7 between bands 5, 6, the spacer 7 being made of a plastic material, such as PU (*i.e.*, Isocore), mentioned in column 3, line 7, which may have marked intrinsic damping.

In addition, in column 2, lines 18-27 of HAUSER, it is also mentioned that the central regions of the board have a thickness in the vertical direction which is small in comparison with the support bands 5, 6. This means, of course, that it is the strip that makes the thickness of the board small.

Nothing in HAUSER teaches or suggests that a reinforcement, such as reinforcement layer 3, is to have even a portion that includes a mechanically weakened structure. Even the drawing figures of HAUSER fail to suggest same.

With specific regard to the portions of HAUSER cited in the Office action, Applicants respectfully submit that such portions fail to teach or suggest Applicants' invention. For example, column 2, lines 18-27 of HAUSER describe the central region – not the reinforcement. The comment in the rejection that a reinforcement of HAUSER

has at least one groove substantially linear, Applicants submit that HAUSER discloses a depression (groove) in the board but not in the reinforcement itself; that is, the reinforcement is not mechanically weakened, nor is there a reduction in the quantity of material of the reinforcement. With regard to the comment in the rejection that HAUSER discloses a reinforcement plugged with a fitting, Applicants submit that the structure referenced as a "groove" is not that of a reinforcement, but of the board. Actually, the aforementioned "strip" of HAUSER is plugged by a fitting.

At least for the foregoing reasons, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection based upon HAUSER is kindly requested.

Applicants submit that PARTRIDGE fails to cure the above-mentioned deficiencies of HAUSER and, at least for that reasons, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection based upon a combination of HAUSER and PARTRIDGE is requested.

As mentioned in Applicants' paragraph 0012, the mechanically weakened structure of the reinforcement allows for a more substantial deformation of the board for a given force, compared to a board without Applicants' invention, or it provides for the same amount of deformation upon the application of a slight force. PARTRIDGE provides a system for mounting bindings onto a board with no limited number of mounting combinations, as mentioned in column 1, lines 53-58. In addition to Applicants' comment above, regarding PARTRIDGE and HAUSER, the problems of the invention and PARTRIDGE are different, as are those and HAUSER. Applicants submit that one skilled in the art would not look to PARTRIDGE to modify HAUSER.

D. New Claims

Applicants have added new claims 11-24, of which claim 16 is independent.

Claim 11 calls for the mechanically weakened structure to comprise at least one groove extending through a thickness of said at least one reinforcement. HAUSER fails to teach or suggest same.

Claim 12 calls for the mechanically weakened structure to be located between the boot retention zones. Further claim 13 calls for openings to extend into the rider support surface in the first and second boot retention zones.

Claim 14 specifically recites the board of the invention to have a sandwich structure including at least a second reinforcement and a core between the one reinforcement of claim 1 and the second reinforcement.

Claim 15 further limits the core, by specifying that the core comprises wood or synthetic foam material.

Claim 16 is independent and is directed specifically to a snowboard that includes, *inter alia*, an upper reinforcing layer, a lower reinforcing layer, and a core between the upper and lower reinforcing layers, whereby, at least in the central zone between the contact lines of the snowboard, at least one of the upper and lower reinforcing layers has a portion with a mechanically weakened structure with respect to a structure of a remainder of the one of the upper and lower reinforcing layers.

Claims 17-25 further limit the snowboard of claim 16. Claim 17 specifies that the mechanically weakened structure comprises the portion of the upper (and/or lower) reinforcing layer having a thickness that is not uniform along the width of the surfboard. No such teaching or suggestion is had by HAUSER or the combination of HAUSER and PARTRIDGE.

Claim 18 further specifies that mechanically weakened structure has a groove extending completely through the thickness of the reinforcing layer. Claim 19 further specifies that the groove extends length-wise along the surfboard.

Claims 20 and 21 recite specific dimensions of the groove, viz., 5 and between 5 and 50 centimeters, respectively.

Claim 22 calls for the mechanically weakened structure to be located between front and rear boot retention zones.

Claim 23 depends from claim 22 and calls for openings that extend into the rider support surface in the first and second boot retention zones.

Finally, claim 24 calls for the core to comprise a wood or synthetic foam material.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

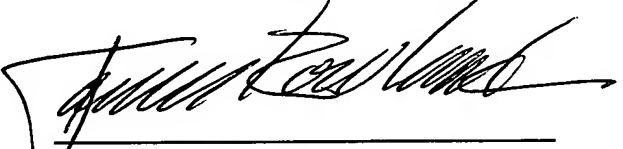
The grounds of objection and rejection advanced in the Office action have been addressed and are believed to be overcome. Accordingly, reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested.

A check is enclosed for payment of an extension of fee. No additional fee is believed to be due at this time. However, the Commissioner is authorized to charge any fee required for acceptance of this reply as timely and complete to Deposit Account No. 19-0089.

If it were to be found that an extension of time were necessary to render this reply timely and/or complete, Applicants request an extension of time under 37 CFR §1.136(a) in the necessary increment(s) of month(s) to render this reply timely and/or complete and the Commissioner is authorized to charge any necessary extension of time fee under 37 CFR §1.17 to Deposit Account No. 19-0089.

Any comments or questions concerning this application can be directed to the undersigned at the telephone or fax number given below.

Respectfully submitted,
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Attachments: Substitute Specification – Marked-Up Version
 Substitute Specification – Clean Version